

Here are a few top tips to help you use the Progression Tools and get the most out of them:

- Explain what the activity is – saying something like ‘we’re just going to do some talking and listening together’ is fine, you don’t need to give too much detail. Some children might also be motivated if you tell them that you’ll be the one doing all the reading and writing and they won’t have to do any!
- If the child asks about what you’re writing down during the test, tell them not to worry and that you’re just writing down all the clever things they’re saying!
- If you’re using a recording device to record the answers, explain that you’ll be using this to record what they say so that you don’t forget!
- Find a room with few distractions. Sit at a table next to each other
- Make sure that you’ve got everything ready before you bring the child in to the room (e.g. answer sheets photocopied, recording device ready etc)
- If the child is interested, show them the reference booklet and the answer sheets and talk about what they’re for – that these are just a way to see how they’re doing with their talking and listening
- Depending on the concentration level of the child, you may need to break up the test a bit. If so, negotiate a break time between you, e.g. ‘once we get to the end of the green section, we can take a little break’
- Encourage the child throughout – don’t make it obvious if they’ve got an answer right or wrong, but encouragement like ‘you’re working really hard’ or ‘there’s lots to listen to and you’re doing really well’ will help keep them motivated
- Speak clearly and make your voice interesting when you’re giving the instructions and asking the questions
- You can repeat the question or instruction once only. If you do need to repeat it, make sure you repeat it in full, not just part of it
- If you find a child really struggling with any item, or if they need more than one repetition, you can just move on to the next item. Saying something like ‘that is a hard one – let’s try another’ will help to keep their motivation up
- If the child notices you in their class during the observation part of the test and asks about what you’re doing, you can explain that you’re just checking out how they’re doing with their talking and listening in class